

**Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency
for the District of Columbia**
Office of the Trustee
Washington, DC 20004

October 14, 1999

MEMORANDUM

TO: Office of the Trustee
Adult Probation Services
D.C. Board of Parole

FROM: James E. Williams
Associate Director
Management and Administration

SUBJECT: Travel Policy 99-03
Temporary Travel Duty

Attached is Travel Policy # 99-03, regarding Temporary Duty Travel. Please familiarize yourself with the document and distribute it to all employees.

If you have questions concerning the information contained in this guide, please contact Danita Smith, Financial Specialist, CSOSA Office of the Controller at (202) 220-5712. Questions regarding the Employee Travel Card should be directed to the Agency Program Coordinator (APC), Sharon Humphries, Senior Financial Specialist, at (202) 220-5714.

**Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency
Administrative Policy
Travel 99-03
Temporary Duty Travel**

A. Procedures Before Traveling

An employee must prepare a Travel Authorization Form before leaving on official Government travel. This form must be submitted to a designated official for advance approval of travel. The designated official must have authority to approve travel authorizations as delegated by an OBD-234, Accountable Officer Signature Form (Attachment 1). Upon receipt of Accountable Officer approval, the original authorization must be submitted to the CSOSA Office of the Controller for accounting purposes. The Office of the Controller maintains the original travel authorization and returns a copy of the travel authorization to the traveler prior to travel. **Leaving for Government travel without forwarding an approved travel authorization to Office of the Controller may jeopardize reimbursement for travel.**

B. Preparing a Travel Authorization Form

Travel Authorization Forms can be accessed electronically through *Inform*s, a software program that allows the employee traveler or staff assistant to prepare travel authorization and voucher forms via the personal computer (PC). The software guides the user through completion of necessary information in each section of the authorization. To access *Inform*s, double click on the *Inform*s icon. Next, select "DOJ TDY/Travel Authorization/Advance," and begin keying in the information (Attachment 2). Employees that do not have *Inform*s software installed on their PC may obtain hard copies of the new travel forms from the Office of the Controller or the Community Supervision Administrative Liaison Unit.

Completed forms can be printed from employee PC terminals. Employees should review calculations made by the software before filing the completed form. New and existing employees should receive training before using the *Inform*s software. *Inform*s training and travel policy assistance is available from the Office of the Controller or the Community Supervision Administrative Liaison Unit.

C. Prudent Person Rule

Employees traveling on official business are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise when traveling on personal business. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, luxury accommodations, and other services that are unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees will be responsible for excess cost and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience pursuant to Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) 301-1.3 (Attachment 3).

D. Transportation

The General Services Administration annually contracts with commercial carriers for reduced coach fares for Government employees traveling on official business. The use of contract airlines is mandatory between city-pairs for which contract rate coach service exists. Use of any other airline or class of service is reimbursable only if one or more of the conditions listed below are met. In all such cases, the reason for use of a non-contract carrier must be noted on the voucher.

- Space on the contract carrier is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of travel, or additional overnight lodging would be required.
- The contract carrier schedule is inconsistent with the scheduling of travel during normal working hours to the extent possible.
- A non-contract carrier offers a lower fare available to the general public, the use of which will result in a lower trip cost, including lodging, meals and other expenses. (Note: This condition is not applicable if the contract airline offers a comparable fare limited to Government employees).

E. Travel Management Center

Omega World Travel is the Travel Management Center (TMC) for the Department of Justice that is also used by CSOSA. Omega will make all necessary reservations for airline flights, rail services, rental cars and hotel/motel accommodations. Omega automatically makes reservations according to Federal airline and per diem rates. Travelers will obtain a faxed travel itinerary from Omega the day the reservations are made. Travelers should verify rates on the itinerary with the per diem rates for that destination. Valid per diem rates are contained within *Inform*s.

Employees are required to use their Employee Travel Card to pay for all official travel expenses. If you do not have a Travel Card, contact the Travel Card Agency Program Coordinator (APC) to obtain a Travel Card or to use the CSOSA GTA account.

Omega will deliver tickets to employee's office. The traveler should have tickets delivered a few days in advance of the trip. When tickets are lost or unused, Omega should be contacted immediately for replacement or refund.

Omega World Travel is located at:

Bicentennial Building
600 E Street, NW, 1st Floor
Washington, DC 20530

The hours of operation are 7:30am to 6:30pm, Monday through Friday. The telephone numbers for Omega are as follows:

(202) 393-8240
(202) 393-8250
(202) 393-8215 (Fax)
(800)-685-6342 (Emergencies; After Hours; Weekends)

If you have any questions or concerns about your travel reservations, a customer service representative from Omega World Travel will be available to assist you.

F. Frequent Flyer Benefits

Frequent flyer benefits are the property of the Federal Government if any portion are earned through official travel. Travelers who have personal frequent flyer accounts are not permitted to collect any benefits accrued through official travel.

G. Per Diem

Hotel/Motel Occupancy Taxes

Employees on official travel are no longer exempt from Federal tax and should not use the U.S. Tax Exemption Certificate. However, some areas voluntarily exempt Federal travelers. In those areas, the local form should be used. Copies of these forms may be obtained from the CSOSA Office of the Controller or the Community Supervision Administrative Liaison Unit.

Per Diem Entitlements

Per Diem entitlements begin accruing at the time an employee leaves his/her residence, office or other authorized point of departure, and end accrual when he/she returns to his/her home, office or other authorized point of return. Per Diem entitlements do not accrue for official travel totaling 12 hours or less. Meal costs and incidental expenses (M&IE) reimbursement may not be requested during local travel (travel within 50 miles of an employee's residence or official duty station).

When lodging is required, the actual cost of lodging will be reimbursed up to the maximum rate for the area, plus a fixed allowance for M&IE, that is also determined by the area. Employees receive 75 percent per diem M&IE for the first and last days of travel. "Actual Subsistence" is available for certain cities where the standard reimbursements are not adequate. If a hotel cannot be located within the per diem rate, approval for actual subsistence up to 150 percent M&IE may be requested. A memo to a designated approving official must be attached to the Travel Authorization, substantiating the request for up to 150 percent increase of M&IE for the destination.

Examples of M&IE maximums:

	<u>@\$30 M&IE</u>	<u>@\$42M&IE</u>
Breakfast	\$6	\$9
Lunch	\$6	\$9
Dinner	\$16	\$22
Incidentals	\$2	\$2

Some hotels offer a Government rate, which is usually different than the GSA-contracted "Government" rate. Make sure you secure a reservation rate under the GSA contracted rate. Use your Employee Travel Card to pay for your lodging.

H. Official and Personal Calls

For overnight travel away from home, employees are allowed personal calls to their home at limited Government expense. The actual cost is reimbursable, up to \$5.00 per night within the continental United States. For calls between the continental United States and Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam or any territory or possession of the United States, the total reimbursement is up to \$7.50 per night. Emergency calls are reimbursed up to a maximum of \$40 for a single trip away from home. Emergency situations must qualify under the definition of personal emergency in the Federal Travel Regulations at paragraph 301-12.4(e) (Attachment 4).

I. Vouchering for Reimbursement

Employees must submit completed vouchers within five days of returning from official travel. The new Travel Voucher Form can be accessed through *Inform*s, select "Travel Voucher Summary" (Attachment 5). Completion is similar to that of the Travel Authorization. *Inform*s training and travel policy assistance is available from the Office of the Controller or the Community Supervision Administrative Liaison Unit.

Receipts are required for any item costing **\$25 or more**. Receipts for rental cars, airfares, train fares and lodging are required, regardless of amount. Subsistence receipts, e.g., meal receipts, are not needed and should not be submitted with the travel voucher unless costing **\$25 or more**.

Receipts with the travel voucher should be taped to a blank 8 ½ x 11-inch sheet of paper. Receipts should not be stacked one on top of the other or stapled. The travel voucher, original authorization form and receipts should have only one staple in the upper left corner. The traveling employee must sign the travel voucher, attesting to its accuracy.

Originals of the employee signed travel voucher, travel authorization and receipts constitute a completed voucher. Payment requires the original voucher. Completed vouchers should be forwarded to the authorizing official for signature, located in

CSOSA Office of the Controller, Suite 1370, 633 Indiana Avenue, NW.

Reimbursement checks are normally received by the employee within five (5) to seven (7) business days after receipt of the voucher by the Office of the Controller. If a check is not received within ten (10) business days, contact the Office of Controller at (202) 220-5700.